

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended): A thermally expandable microcapsule,  
which contains a shell polymer and a volatile expanding agent becoming gaseous at a temperature not higher than a softening point of said shell polymer, said shell polymer containing a nitrile monomer component in an amount 70% by weight or more and a content of an acrylonitrile component in said nitrile-based monomer component being 40-50 to 85% by weight, and the volatile expanding agent containing ~~a~~ the volatile expanding agent having a branched-chain structure or a cyclic structure in an amount 30% by weight or more.